



www.epa.gov/OWOW/heritage/rivers.html

The American Heritage Rivers Initiative was created to advance the goals identified by river communities. The Initiative has three objectives: natural resource and environmental protection, economic revitalization, and historic and cultural preservation. No new regulatory authority is created as a result of the Initiative. Likewise, no direct federal funding is available to the Initiative. Existing federal authorities and programs are used to assist the community partners in implementation of their goals.

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Fact Sheet/Spring 2005

Connecticut River



What Makes the Connecticut River Watershed Special?

- It is New England's largest watershed - 11,000 square-miles in 4 states with 38 major tributaries.
- It is also New England's longest river - 410 miles.
- The Connecticut River drops 2,400 feet from its source before flowing into Long Island Sound.
- The lower 60 miles of the river are tidal, with the boundary between salt and freshwater about 17 miles from its mouth under normal conditions.
- The Connecticut River flow accounts for 70 percent of the freshwater inflow to Long Island Sound, delivering a daily average flow of nearly 16,000 cubic feet per second.
- The watershed was nationally designated as one of fourteen American Heritage Rivers.
- The entire watershed has been designated as the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, the only refuge encompassing an entire ecosystem.
- The river's tidal wetlands were designated "wetlands of international importance especially for wildlife", one of 15 wetlands recognized in the US.

What are the Long Term Goals?

- Support community based efforts to restore and protect the environmental, economic, cultural, and historic resources of the Connecticut River Watershed.
- Bring people back to the river by providing greater river access and encouraging investment in carefully planned river-front economic development.

Progress/Goals for the Future

What Partnership Progress has Been Made?

- Connecticut River Joint Commissions (CRJC) has awarded \$1.1 million in federal grant funds to support 373 locally-inspired projects that implement recommendations of the CRJC Corridor Management Plan. This investment has been matched ten-fold with non-federal funding and in-kind support.
- CRJC formed the Connecticut River Byway Council to fulfill its legislative mandate to promote tourism and economic development.
- To address erosion as a prevalent river concern, CRJC developed a series of popular fact sheets on riverbank erosion assessment and restoration, and a second series on riparian buffers. (See CRJC website)
- Federal agencies awarded \$217,000 to CRJC to prioritize erosion sites for restoration along the entire 275 miles of main river stem in NH and VT.
- EPA awarded \$1,275,000 of Brownfields grants to several Connecticut Valley communities and organizations.
- EPA awarded New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC) \$225,000 for the Connecticut River Nitrogen Monitoring and Modeling Project to support implementation of the Long Island Sound TMDL for nitrogen.
- EPA awarded MA DEP a \$50,000 grant to develop a bacteria monitoring plan in the Connecticut River and tributaries, with Greater Springfield as the focus area.

Connecticut River



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Connecticut River Watershed

 Connecticut River Basin Boundary
County Boundaries

This map produced by the
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What EPA Actions are Planned for 2005?

►Water Quality and Designated Use:

CRJC, NH DES, and EPA have partnered to collect and analyze water quality samples over the entire 275 river miles of the Connecticut River in New Hampshire and Vermont to determine if water quality is sufficient to support designated uses of the river (fishing and swimming).

►Erosion, Deposition, and Channel Change:

CRJC has undertaken a fluvial geomorphology assessment of the Connecticut River from Murphy Dam in Pittsburg, NH to the Gilman Dam in Lunenburg, VT. CRJC is examining the natural and human causes for channel change on the river, identifying the most unstable and degraded reaches, and choosing restoration strategies to bring the river toward a stable equilibrium. Funding support has come from NOAA (\$27,500) and the Upper Connecticut River Mitigation and Enhancement Fund (\$32,600) associated with the Fifteen Mile Falls hydro development.



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Note: EPA New England offers businesses and municipalities information and assistance to improve compliance with environmental laws and be better stewards of their local environment. Please call to learn how EPA can help.

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